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# The Review of Religions

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on the Cross, but he was made to appear[1] to them like crucified."

Now in taking the Gospels as evidence of the truth of our contention that Christ did not die on the Cross, we must remember that all of them were written many years after the crucifixion, when it must have been very difficult for the writers, however anxious they were to make an accurate record, to collect reliable and trustworthy data from the welter of hazy impressions formed in their minds during the rapid succession of events which culminated in the climax of Calvary. This explains also the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions to be found in the four accounts. It must further be borne in mind that any historical treatise is greatly affected by the personal beliefs and mentality of the historian.

Investigators and commentators maintain that Gospels contain two aspects: the teachings of Christ, which are the spirit of the Gospels and also various historical data such as the generation, crucifixion and resurrection. These last we must deal with in the same way as we normally deal with any other historical work when investigating some past occurrence—we must carefully sift the evidence to separate the reliable from the unreliable and in this particular case we must bear in mind the fact that the Gospel writers believed in Christ's crucifixion and death and if we find occurrences mentioned in the Gospels which do not bear out their beliefs, it is because such occurrence were so well known that they could not reasonably be omitted in a record of the events.

The first argument to support our contention is taken from the account of Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane when he knew that his arrest was imminent. It appears from the accounts given in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 that Christ went to Gethsemane with certain of his disciples and ordered

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1. Compare Revelation 5 : 6 "And I beheld, and Lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the leaders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. In the Arabic gospels the words are كانه مذبوح.

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them to pray, but instead they slept and twice he awakened them without success. He himself, however, prayed with great humility in the words: Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me" (Mark). Or according to Luke, "Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me". In this manner he passed the whole night in prayer with great earnestness.

How can we believe that God ignored his prayers?

Christ himself claims that God hears his prayers in these words: "Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me and I know that thou hearest me always" (John XI: 42). He also enjoins others to pray and says that God will answer their prayers (Mark 11 : 24); he also says: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish will he for a fish give him a serpent?" Nevertheless, if even Christ's own prayer concerning such an important matter as his death by a particularly horrible means, was disregarded, his injunctions that his disciples should pray for that which they required and the statement that they will be answered, would seem to be very pointless.

We have no option, therefore, but to believe that God did hear his prayer and in accordance with the prophecies delivered him from an accursed death.

The following from Psalms 22 may be quoted in this connection. "The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and feet, I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them and they cast lots upon my vesture.[2] But be not thou far from me O Lord. O my strength haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.....For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him, he heard."

2. See John 19 : 23.

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Also in Psalms 34 : " Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.[3] With regard to the last sentence it will be remembered that whilst the limbs of the two thiefs hanging at the sides of Christ were smashed, Christ was let untouched.

Other books of the Old Testament agree that God hears the righteous but not the wicked or His enemies, Psalms 18, 116, 66. Proverbs v. Jeremiah XI Ezekiel 7 Job 13, 22. Also in John 9 : 31 we read " Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth."

If then we deny that God heard and answered the prayer of Christ we have no alternative but to believe that Christ was a sinner and not one who did according to the will of God.

Christ however says : " I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (John 8 : 12) ; also " which of you convinceth me of sin." (8 : 46). If we believe him we must necessarily believe then that his prayer was answered and that he did not die on the Cross.

It is apparent too that Christ himself was sure that he would not die and that God had heard and accepted his prayer by the sign of the angel in the garden of Gethsemane, because when he realised his terrible condition, nailed on the Cross without seemingly the slightest chance of escape, for the first time a doubt assailed him which found expression in the despairing cry " My God, my God, why hast thou foresaken me." But God did not forsake him and prepared means for his safety. If however we accept the assumption that he did die on the Cross, we believe that God did forsake him, which is totally at variance with the words contained in John 16 : 32. " Behold the hour cometh, yea is come now, that ye shall be scattered every man

3. John 19 : 36.

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to his own and shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me."

Thus we find that the Jews failed in their plan as we see in Hebrews V. 7. " Who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared."

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For our next argument we take Matthew 23 : 13. " But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Also Mark 16 : 16. " He that believeth not shall be damned."

Now the Pharisees believed that they had put Christ to an accursed death ; and if this is true then according to their law they proved conclusively that he was a false prophet and impostor. Even St. Paul admits this in Galatians III : " He was made a curse for us, for it is written ' cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree '."

Therefore the Pharisees were justified in their disbelief ; and in that case how can we accept that they are to be damned for it.

If we examine the meaning of the word cursed we cannot, any more than the Pharisees, believe a cursed man to be a prophet and the beloved of God, for a man cannot be cursed unless his heart is far from God and empty of his love and knowledge, unless he is deprived, too, of the mercy and grace of God. He must be in his errors like Satan and at enmity with God ; this is the reason why Satan is named the Accursed One.

Of a wise man like Christ, then, who claimed to be the light of the world, the beloved son of God, whom God loved, with whom God was always and did not ever leave him and heard his prayers — can we believe such a man to be a cursed one, who had no relation with

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God, whose heart was overcome by error and disbelief.

If we examine these facts carefully and see their inconsistency we must necessarily reject the possibility of death on the Cross which would turn Jesus Christ into a man accursed.

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Our next argument is taken from Matthew 27 : 32/53. "And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his (Christ's) resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

Now it is obvious that this occurrence cannot be accepted in its literal sense because, if it were literally true we would not fail to find some reference to such an evident miracle of such an astounding character in the chronicles of the period, but there are none to be found and Matthew is the only writer to mention it.

Also, this would have been an excellent opportunity for the Jews to question these resurrected holy men as to the truth of Christ and if they had vouched for him there can be no doubt that the Jews would have accepted Christ without further question.

The truth of the matter is that this quotation refers to a vision seen by certain righteous men and it is well known that such visions are capable of interpretation as Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharoah.

Now in a book by Abdul Ghani Nab Lussi called *Ta'Fir anam* concerning the interpretation of dreams and written over 600 years ago, we read that if any man sees in dream corpses coming out of their graves it means that a great man who is in prison will be released.

Now as this vision was seen at the time of his resurrection the inference is obvious that his death was only apparent and that in consequence of the swoon which led his persecutors to believe that he was killed his release from the prison in which he had been lodged was effected.

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Jesus, when called upon by the Jews to show a sign said, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign : and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas : For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly : so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12 : 40).

This saying of Jews settles the question once and for all. The Jews sought to kill him, but he escaped death in the most miraculous way. They had done all that lay in their power to put him to death but God delievered him from their hands. Thus his escape was a sign for the Jews. The words of Jesus also indicated the way in which the sign was to be shown and the manner in which he was to be delivered from the hands of his murderous foes. He was to be placed in the belly of the earth like one dead, but his case was to be like that of Jonah in the belly of the whale. The latter, when in the belly of the whale, was not dead, but alive. Similarly Jesus was to be alive and not dead in the bosom of the earth. Jesus by comparing his case to that of Jonah clearly indicated the way in which he was to escape. He was to enter the sepulchre alive and come out alive, just as Jonah entered his living sepulchre alive and had come out of it alive.

Now I will mention some facts which show that he did not die on the Cross. He was alive, though unconscious, when he was taken down from the Cross. The three hours' suspension could not kill him.[4]

Pilate wondered how Jesus could have expired so soon (Mark 15 : 44). The two thieves who remained on the Cross for the same space of time were both alive and conscious when their bodies were taken down from the accursed tree. In order to kill them the soldiers broke their bones, but they spared Jesus (John

4. The express office of the watchers—soldiers with their centurion—was to prevent the removal of the body. This was necessary from the lingering character of the death which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation. (Euse b. H. E. VIII. 8. sen. prov. 3.) But for this guard the sufferers might have been taken down and recovered (as in the case of Sandokes : Herod VII, 194) as was actually done in the case of a friend of Josephus though only one survived out of three (Dic. of the Bible by Sir William Smith and Rev. J. M. Fuller, M.A. London, 1893).

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19 : 32). Blood flowed out when a soldier pierced his side with a spear—a sure sign of life. (John 19 : 34). After he was taken down from the Cross, it was not to his enemies, but to his friends that his body was given over. (John 19 : 38). The haste with which his friends tried to secure his body bespeaks a desire on their part to save him whom apparently they had not yet given up for dead. The steps taken by the Jews to have a guard posted on his sepulchre also shows that they were not sure of his death. (Matthew 27 : 62).

The Roman governor was very loth to have Jesus crucified and nothing could have pleased him more than to see him delivered. He would have therefore fain connived at his escape ; nay he would not have been unwilling even to lend every indirect and secret aid to save Jesus. His refraining from punishing the soldiers who pretended to have gone to sleep in the time of their watch when Jesus left the tomb also throws a flood of light on his attitude to Jesus. There are signs of a secret conspiracy to save Jesus. Pilate's wife's vision (Matthew 27 : 19) must also have induced him to do all that lay in his power to deliver Jesus from the clutches of the relentless Jews.

The soldiers and the centurion who refrained from ensuring the death of Jesus by breaking his bones as well as the soldiers that pretended to have gone to sleep during their watch must have been, like their governor, the sympathisers of Jesus. The centurion and the soldiers looked upon him as a holy man. (Luke 23 : 47). The appearance of angels to Pilate's wife shows God's purpose to save Jesus, and surely God has power to fulfil His purpose.

The tomb in which Jesus was laid was a small chamber hewn in a rock, with a door which was closed by means of a heavy stone. The sepulchre was spacious enough to permit a number of men to stay in it without being suffocated. (Mark 16 : 5, John 20 : 9). It lay in a garden belonging to a devoted friend and loving disciple of Jesus—who in secret (John 19 : 38) must have lavished care on him to restore him to consciousness. Jesus left the tomb, after 36 hours, on the third

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day. The women that went to embalm the body of Jesus with spices and perfumes found that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus was not to be seen in the sepulchre. (Mark 16 : 4). The body that had been nailed to the Cross was not in the tomb. This deals a death blow to the theory that it was not with his body of clay but with an astral body that Jesus rose. But Jesus was not also at any great distance from it. When the women stood wondering at the disappearance of Jesus, a familiar voice spoke to them from behind and on turning round they saw that their master whose sacred body they had come to anoint stood before them, but he was dressed, not in his own clothes, but in those of a gardener. (John 20 : 15).

The reason of this disguise was apparent. He had had a narrow escape from death, and if he had again been seen by the Jews, he would have been re-arrested and hung once more on the Cross. He did not wish to be recognised by any Jew. His followers were still at Jerusalem, but he did not think it safe to meet them there. Hence he sent a secret message to them to depart for the distant province of Galilee and promised to see them there. (Matthew 28 : 7, Mark 16 : 8). He seemed to be in a great hurry to leave Jerusalem. To delay was dangerous. He told the women that he would go before his disciples. (Matthew 28 : 7). Why such hurry and why such haste to leave the place? Will any Christian answer this question? He knew that the Jews would soon come to know that he had left the tomb and that they might make a search for him. His case was like that of a person who makes good his escape from a prison and his only concern after leaving the place is to flee away in disguise lest he be recognised and re-arrested. He walked the whole distance to Galilee on foot, which he need not have done if he had been other than an earthly being. Again, he did not take the direct road to Galilee but followed a roundabout way. This was evidently done to evade pursuit. In this way also he did not throw off his disguise. The two disciples whom he met on the way to Emmaus failed to recognise him on account of his disguise. (Luke 34 : 13—16). He met his disciples

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only in secret or out of the way places and did not stay long with them. That was also due to the fear of being re-arrested by his enemies. He did not at all make a public appearance. He also suffered from hunger and thirst. Whenever he met his disciples he asked them whether they could give him something to eat and he ate in their presence. (Luke 24 : 42, John 21 : 13). This clearly shows that he was yet in his earthly mould, he was not a spirit but an ordinary mortal with a mortal body. He met his disciples to show them that he had escaped the accursed death of the Cross. If he not seen them again, their faith in his Messiahship might have been shaken and they might have gone back to the faith of their fathers, seeing that he whom they had taken for the promised Messiah of the Jews had died a death, which, according to the Old Testament, was an accursed death and could not fall to the lot of a true messenger of God. He saw them to re-establish their tottering faith. When one of them found it hard to believe that he was not a spirit, but the very Jesus in his flesh and bones that had been nalied to the Cross he showed them his wounds. The statement that he appeared suddenly again is a myth. If that were the case, the suspicions of the doubting disciples were only too well founded. If it is true that he asked Thomas to put his fingers into the prints of his nails ; (John 20 : 27) if it is true that he said to his disciples who thought him a spirit " Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath no flesh and bones, as ye see me have (Luke 24 : 39) ; if it is true that he ate in the presence of his disciples ; if it is true that he disguised himself as a gardener after leaving the sepulchre ; if it is true that he walked the whole distance from Jerusalem to Galilee on foot ; if it is true that he took every possible precaution against re-arrest, it follows as clearly as day follows night that the statement that he appeared suddenly in rooms whose doors were shut is false and that his was not an astral body, but a body of flesh and bones. This also shows that the statement of the Evangelists that forty days or so after the tragic event of the crucifixion he was lifted

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up to heavens by a cloud is a myth, for it being established that he was in his body of clay, it is foolish to say that a vapoury cloud lifted him up to heavens. No cloud has power to raise a body of clay; no mortal can soar to heavens. If he assumed an aerial body, where did his body of clay go? He did not leave it in the sepulchre and we have seen that it was with a body of clay that he moved about during the remaining days of his sojourn in his native land.

A Christian may ask me here, if Jesus did not ascend to heaven, where did he go? To this I would reply, that I am not bound to answer this question. If a person is compelled to bid farewell to his friends and never returns to see them again it does not show that he has ascended to heaven. The fourth gospel tells us that Jesus for the last time met his disciples at the sea of Tiberius and said to Peter "Feed my sheep", and asked one of his disciples to accompany him, and went away to another unknown place. But unfortunately for Christianity, in this age of wonders, a discovery has been made by the Promised Messiah which has exploded the theory than Jesus was lifted up to heaven. The tomb of Jesus has been discovered and it has been conclusively established that the occupant of the tomb is Jesus son of Mary. The tomb lies in the Khan Yar Street of Srinagar, Kashmir. And the tomb of his disciple Thomas, who put his finger in the prints of nails is found in Madras. And thus was fulfilled which was prophesied by the Holy Prophet of Islam 1350 years ago 'the Promised Messiah will break the Cross and show the falsehood of belief in Jesus's death on the Cross.' And also was fulfilled that which was said by Jesus himself that at the time of his second advent "shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." (Matthew, 24 : 30). It means Christians, Jews and Muslims who are the inhabitants of the earth (Palestine) shall mourn when they know the falsehood of their belief in his accursed death and in his abiding in heaven with his physical body.

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# THE FAILURE OF CHRISTIANITY

*By*

*A. H. Yusuf of Borneo and Java, Tahreek-i-Jadeed student.*

The church is indeed losing its power when it can no longer punish the heretic.

The truth is, the Christian church is filled with unbelievers and it only needs a heresy trial to show that the faith in Christ has become a disagreeable memory.

Christianity is a failure wherever it comes in contact with scholarship, with science, with research, with honesty or commonsense. It is a success only where it can preach from its pulpit and there is no one to ask any questions.

This is a critical age. The mind of man is open and his eye looks forward with the single desire to see the truth. The old God idea is being rejected. The religion that painted God with a frown on his brow and a lash in his hand is losing its prestige, not only in literary and social, but in ecclesiastical circles as well. The twentieth century finds the God of Christianity, the God of the Bible *too hard and tough for it to swallow.*

Christianity is a failure in its theology and christology. The God has grown smaller as man has grown larger and its Christ has been found to be in the way of human progress.

The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob has become the God of wealth and power and covetousness, the most popular trinity in Christendom, while the Christ of John, Paul and Peter is now the Christ of Rockefeller, of big finance, of world conquest and exploitation.

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Persons, who dare to be sensible, have no use for Christianity. On the street a Christian is not known from a freethinker. In the affairs of life the Christian faith is of no account. Science pursues its studies as though there was no such thing as Christianity. Business is carried on regardless of the Christian doctrines, and life is lived without thought or care of what is in the Bible. The reason of this is *that Christianity is not true, it does not agree with human nature, it does not satisfy the intellect, it does not answer the heart of man and it does not accord with the facts of life.*

A fact is holier than a dogma. It is more to be depended upon than all the faith in the world. The foot that rests upon a fact will not slip. The hand that grasps a fact has a hold upon the eternal. A fact is a sun that will shine in the skies of life when every candle of faith has burned to the socket. The religion that contradicts knowledge, that denies facts, *digs its own grave.* The world is not a failure, science is not a failure, love is not a failure, there is one permanent reason why Christianity is a failure, and that is, there is no necessity left for it. It was a medicine, to cure the sick, to restore the diseased. But the difficulty with it is that it does not fit the case now.

We don't need to be saved, in the way that Christianity is supposed to save us. Man does not need atonement, but improvement.

He does not need to be saved, he needs to be educated and liberated. *Where people are enslaved, they should be liberated. When they are right, they should be given justice. When they are living in darkness, they should be led into the light.* It is not the priest that the world needs, but a teacher and a reformer. Christianity is a thing of the past and not of the present. It is the living thought we want to-day. How to live, is the knowledge, the world needs.

There is a lot of secret mystery that people put up with on account of its associations. If a thing can be

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explained, we want it explained, but we cannot accept every trick as a miracle nor see in every mysterious occurrence the interposition of a deity. This age does not regard credulity as a saint, but as an idiot. The doubts of to-day are questions. They are not denials, they are inquiries. We want the truth and we are not afraid of it. We are watching for the sign of better things for man. We are looking for the promises of better conditions for humanity and the progress of the world is to be on the line of this promise.

Of course the clergyman will not admit that Christianity is a failure, but he knows very well that it cannot defend itself, nor can it support itself. He claims that his religion is divinely inspired and divinely instituted and yet he cannot defend Christianity from the criticism of man. The very fact that this is so proves it to be a failure. If it were true men would accept it in the same way as they accept a truth.

> "Islam on the contrary, demands a certain amount of actions along with the acceptance of certain principles."

The chief defect in Christianity is that men cannot understand what it teaches. They have to accept everything on "*faith.*"

They believe that they will be saved, but they don't know it. They believe that Jesus Christ was crucified for their benefit, but they don't understand it. They believe that by some mysterious process their faith is to get them into heaven, but they don't understand it.

Let us look at this matter honestly. If religion is but a statue, more or less beautiful, that has been carved by man, it can be broken to pieces by the "Luftwaffe" or "Blenheims"—, but if it be a star or a sun, it is above Hitlers power to demolish or destroy. In other words, if it be the outcome of nature, the manifestation of the life of the universe, it will defy and answer the criticism of man but if it be the work of human hand or human brain, it will perish and fall.

Readers are requested to communicate or to visit if possible Qadian-Punjab, the centre of the Ahmadiyya

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Movement for closer investigation of the death of Jesus Christ whose tomb is in Srinagar, Kashmir, and about the truth of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) as the chosen one by God to break the Cross and to be " The Promised Messiah. "

If Christianity is true, why is the Church so afraid of investigation. It should say to the world " this religion is true, test it in every way, look up its records, criticise its dogmas."

Does the Church act as though it believed what it preaches ? To answer this question, readers are advised to refer to the book written by M. F. Cusack whose translation is " The Nun of Kenmare. " It is written in German and Dutch, I believe that it can be found also in English.

Every Christian has to accept the Gospel without question (personal experience when I was a student in a Christian College in Java, Dutch-East Indies).

You must not ask about the origin of Christianity. Wiser men than you have looked into this matter and it is all right.

You must believe, what the minister tells you is true, if you don't, you are an infidel, an atheist, and you will be damned.

It seems to me, that a man who was trying to sell a piece of glass for a diamond would talk just as a Christian Minister does, and tries to get the people accept his " faith. "

He would not want them to examine it critically, or take it into their own hands, but he would want them to take his word for it.

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## GLEANINGS AND GLIMPSES

### The Future of Christianity in Japan

International relations after the Great War were in the main favourable to Christian enterprises in Japan. The Washington Naval Conference in 1921-2 was followed by the Four-Power treaty on Pacific relations, the Five-Power naval treaty establishing naval strength, and the Nine-Power agreement on the treatment of China. Japan had a liberal leadership at home and a high place in the League of Nations abroad. The great earthquake of 1923 called forth the sympathy of the world, especially of the United States, which sent prompt and liberal aid. To be sure, the Exclusion Act of the United States in 1924—that ungentlemanly abrogation of the Gentlemen's Agreement by the unilateral action of Congress—was a serious setback to the progress of good will. But it did not markedly affect the Christian movement; for the Japanese knew the missionaries were their friends and against the congressional action. It was stated by one mission school that the only loss it sustained from that Act was the withdrawal of one pupil returning to her own Japanese family in Hawaii before there was danger that the new law would shut her out. The Japanese awaited a change of tide.

But the Japanese waited in vain. Not only had the United States shut them out: Canada and Australia took the same position and in the 'thirties Japan turned away from the co-operation with the West upon which she had so hopefully entered and fixed her attention upon her nearest neighbours in Asia to secure that economic expansion upon which she felt her national existence depended. The result of her military and political action in Manchuria was the practical invalidation of the Nine-Power treaty and caused Japan's alienation and withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. The so-called 'China Incident', now in its sixth year of destructive warfare, gradually brought more and more protest from Great Britain and America until with a desperate sense of isolation Japan aligned herself in 1940 with the Axis Powers of Europe. Wartime economy had meanwhile required increasing regimentation of daily living and the compression of national thought into the mould of the planned 'New Order in Asia'.

All the schools of the nation became important agencies in the nationalization of thought and deed. An Imperial Rescript for youth was promulgated to impress upon the rising generation its responsibility for national welfare. Textbooks were revised to give the official point of view; government statements of policy were read aloud to the student body and

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expounded; official speeches and 'pep' talks were heard in the schools on national hook-ups; martial songs were taught, patriotic essay-writing stimulated; individualism and self-government in student bodies gave way to organized faculty leadership of student activities; a schedule of manual labour under school supervision was ordered; new and vigorous body-building exercises were added to the gymnastics taught in schools and done widely by the populace with the radio; even military drill in a Christian school for girls was not unknown; thrift was inculcated and savings associations were made practically compulsory for students and teachers alike; blackouts and air-raid defence drills, comfort bags for soldiers, gifts to military hospitals and convalescent centres, sometimes sewing for the army and always contributions to the Red Cross and local organizations to help the families of soldiers, attendance at the farewells, returns and funerals of soldiers—all these were added to the school routine all over the nation. Inspectors visited Christian schools to see how they were aligning themselves with the national effort. Special lectures on the national spirit became required; more hours in the high school curriculum must be devoted to Japanese and Oriental history; even schools which had hitherto resisted the trend towards school uniforms (for the sake of cultivating feminine taste in dress during the formative years) must now conform.

In the period between the Manchurian and the China 'incidents' many schools which had not yet received the Imperial Portraits were asked to apply for them. These Portraits are photographs issued by the Imperial Household Department and represent one each Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress in court costume. The principal of the school receiving them goes to the indicated government office, signs a receipt for them and takes them back to his school, bearing in his person the perpetual responsibility for their safe preservation and treatment with reverence. To this end a fireproof repository has been prepared after its design and location have been approved by the officials; similar approval has also been previously received for the set of internal regulations drawn up by the school arranging for the continuous guard-of-honour duty day and night by qualified staff members, and for the places of safety to which the Portraits shall be removed in case of fire or other danger. The expense, care and responsibilities involved had kept most mission schools and a good many others from applying for an honour that nevertheless is regarded by the populace as the crowning glory of an institution. Now these considerations are swept aside by the national need for unity. It can probably be said with safety that no school of standing is now without the Portraits. The students bow towards the Portrait Repository on their daily entrance and exit. The

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Portraits are brought out from their seclusion on the four great national holidays of the year for a simple and impressive homage ceremony including the singing of the national anthem and the reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education, and are then ceremoniously returned to their resting-place.

As with any nation at war, so in Japan the spirit of prayer has become strongly manifest, and instructions for the schools to visit the shrines for prayer are willingly obeyed. For those who know nothing higher, doubtless their attitude towards the enshrined spirits is one of religious worship; but Japanese Christians feel that reverence for the Imperial Ancestors and for national heroes is not incompatible with their faith in a Higher Power, and they stand on the official statement of their own Department of Education that the shrine ceremonies are a patriotic cult and not a religion. Hence Christian schools take their pupils to the shrines, and at these consecrated ancestral spots pray to the God whom they know for their nation in its crisis. Lesser patriotic ceremonies are often held on the school athletic field, when the student body, led by the faculty, raises the national flag, faces towards that point of the compass where the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo stands, makes a deep bow and offers silent prayer for the safety and success of the armed forces.

The finish of the story encroaches upon the 'forties. In the Religious Organizations Law, effective April 1940, Christianity was recognized along with Buddhism and Neo-Shinto as a legitimate religion of Japan. Christian schools as well as Christian churches have now taken root in Japan as part of its modern culture.

The last step in mission school devolution was taken in the latter half of 1940, after the strong nationalistic cabinet—the third cabinet with Prince Konoye as premier—was set up in July. Then Japanese Christian educators with their finger on the government pulse decided, through the National Christian Education Association, to spread the word around that Christian schools should no longer have foreigners as principals or receive foreign subsidies; and this ideal was adopted. The few missionaries who, after the nationalizing trend of the 'thirties, still remained heads of schools quickly resigned; and everywhere plans were made to dispense as soon as possible—but without wreckage—with the annual mission board subsidies that were still coming to most of them. Some Christian schools, owing to special local conditions, even asked their missionary teachers to leave temporarily; in others, consular urgings or mission board orders brought about a gradual evacuation, till the American and Japanese fund freezing orders in the summer of 1941 completed the practical exodus.

—*International Review of Missions.*

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# Review of Religions

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

## ZIKR-I-HABEEB

### The Promised Messiah

[Translation of a statement by Syed Zain-ul-Abedeen Waliullah Shah, received by us through *Nāzārat Taleef-o-Tasneef*. Continued from previous issue—Ed.]

As we were but children, and as the Promised Messiah used to accommodate our father in his own house as a guest, I and my younger brother freely used to go in and out of the house of the Promised Messiah, without any ceremony or restraint. I remember very well that whenever the plague appeared in the neighbourhood of Qadian, the Promised Messiah took particular care to have disinfected and kept clean not only his own house but the Boarding House of the school as well; and he used to advise his followers, too, to disinfect their houses by lighting fires in the rooms and burning sulphur or *guggal* or by using phenyl, etc. etc. He said that to utilise to the fullest extent the material means placed at our disposal by God was also a way of giving thanks to the Almighty for His favours upon us. The full use of the means at our disposal, he explained, was a form of obedience to God's commandments, while it was against the

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sense of the *shariah* to ignore or discard them. The stage of *tawakkul*, he said, came after this, *i.e.*, one should make use of the material means but should not place his reliance on them. True spiritual insight was that one should see the Hand of God that worked behind these.

I think it was in 1905 that the plague was raging most fiercely in the Punjab, and in Rawalpindi District the scourge was exceptionally violent. My father in those days requested permission from the Promised Messiah to visit Sihala in this district which was his native place. But the Promised Messiah refused him this permission saying that in the *Hadeeth* it was forbidden that a man should visit a place where plague was raging.

When this fell disease broke out in Qadian, it remained confined to localities inhabited by non-Ahmadees and Hindus. The homes of the Promised Messiah and his followers remained immune from it. I well remember an incident of these days which illustrates the miraculous protection of the Promised Messiah and his disciples under the Divine Promise انی احافظ کل من فی الدار (I shall protect all those in (your) house). My parents had come on a visit and we were accommodated in a part of the house of the Promised Messiah—the portion in which Hazrat Umm-i-Nasir now resides. Adjoining this portion in the west was the house of a non-Ahmadee. Immediately after the morning prayers one day sounds of weeping came from this house. I looked down from a window and asked what was the matter and a woman who was weeping replied from the courtyard of this house that so and so had died of plague. Incidents such as this created a feeling of awe, but all the same we felt supremely confident that inside the four walls of the Promised Messiah we were perfectly immune. This house struck by the plague was separated from the house of the Promised Messiah only by a wall. In other words germs of this deadly disease lived and thrived and did their terrible work just across the threshold, but it

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appears that they were forbidden to enter the house of the Promised Messiah.

During the period, when the Promised Messiah was receiving Revelations which indicated that the time of his passing away was drawing near, in the Annual Gathering of the community, then held in *Masjid-i-Aqsā*, he delivered a discourse on the subject *Namāz* (prayer) which also embraced an explanation and amplification of the *Surah Fātihā*. He said: When an *abd* (servant of God) becomes *abd* in the true sense, he is like a piece of iron grown red hot in the furnace and capable of inflicting burns like fire itself. That piece of iron does not possess the properties of fire in itself but absorbs them from the flames and pieces of live coal, similarly the servant of God, though a frail human being in himself, becomes an instrument through which work the qualities and powers of God Almighty. Such an *abd* has no will of his own: all his actions, all his aims originate from the will and purpose and the pleasure of God.

The Promised Messiah on this occasion dealt with this subject at great length, throwing a flood of light on the nature of 'miracles.' In this discourse he also referred to the action of the Holy Prophet Muhammad when in the battle of Badr he flung a handful of sand in the direction of the opposing army, to which incident the Holy Quran refers by saying that the handful of sand thrown by the Holy Prophet was not thrown by him but by Almighty God, Himself. The Promised Messiah explained that behind the human hand which flung this handful of pebbles there was the power and purpose of God of which one manifestation was the desert wind springing up at the instant which blew in the face of the Meccan Army, blinding them and throwing them into confusion at that critical moment. Then he referred to the *Hadeeth* which is to the effect that by performance of the *nawāfil*[1] a man reaches a stage of nearness to and

[1] Prayers, devotions and other virtuous deeds over and above the obligatory extent.

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communion with God where Allah becomes the hands of his servant with which he holds, his feet with which he walks, the eyes with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks, and the ears with which he hears. In explanation of this *Hadeeth* the Promised Messiah said: Such an *abd* of God has no desire of his own left in his heart. Whatever emanates from him, emanates really from the will of God.

Proceeding further, the Promised Messiah also threw light on the nature of *taubah* (turning to God in true and deep repentance). He said that God had invested the soul with properties akin to the properties of fire and water. Water heated to the boiling point could inflict burns. But even boiling water can extinguish a fire. Similarly when the human soul is being licked from all around and consumed by the flames of carnal appetites and sin, it still retains its power to smother these flames by the application of *taubah*.

At this time I was a school boy reading in class VIII, and I retain a clear memory of what I heard from the Promised Messiah in the course of this discourse. I also remember that when the Promised Messiah was speaking I sat near him, behind. At that time there was a heaviness at my heart when I recollected his Revelations bearing on the near approach of his death.

Another event of these days which I also clearly remember is that in view of Maulvi Sanaullah's opposition, his ridicule and ribald abuse the Promised Messiah challenged him to a prayer-duel. He published his prayer to God against Maulvi Sanaullah which in purport was a prayer that of the two the one who was in error in the sight of God should die first and the other should survive. At the end of this prayer the Promised Messiah asked Maulvi Sanaullah to signify his participation in this *Mobāhilah* (prayer-duel). Instead, however, Maulvi Sanaullah only wrote that in resorting to this course Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was relying on the wide and virulent epidemic of plague hoping that chance might prove him to be the victor. I have a clear recollection, too, that on

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this occasion one of his friends brought out a leaflet in which he said that evil people were always given plenty of rope by God. His actual sentence contained this phrase or something identical in meaning:

حرامزادے کی رسی دراز ہوتی ہے

When I heard of this leaflet I was standing in the courtyard of what is now the *Madrisa-i-Ahmadiyyah*. This sentence made me feel very angry. During this same period Dr. Abdul Hakeem, the apostate, also prophesied the death of the Promised Messiah. When we read this prophecy, we felt that after the Promised Messiah had himself revealed that his end was drawing near prophecies like that of Dr. Abdul Hakeem had no value whatsoever.

When the Promised Messiah passed away in Lahore, I was a first year student there in the Government College. We shall never forget Tuesday, 26th May, 1908. On May 25, some moments before sun set I was standing in front of the house of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in the Ahmadiyyah Buildings. Mian Muhammad Shareef of the Punjab Provincial Civil Service (now retired) and some other friends were also with me when the Promised Messiah passed by riding in a *phiton* on his way back from a little drive for the purpose of recreation. When the carriage stopped for the Promised Messiah to alight at the house where he was staying there was gathered there a large crowd of people eager to catch a passing glimpse, and in this crowd there were many non-Ahmadees. Getting down from the carriage, the Promised Messiah put his foot on the wooden steps which gave access to the door. Just at this moment a man in the crowd shouted at him words of a low, filthy and vile abuse. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II also heard this abuse and seemed greatly hurt. On catching sight of our party he came and joined us. After a little conversation probably Mian Muhammad Shareef proposed an outing to the river for the next day. When we all agreed Hazrat Khalifat-ul-Masih II asked me to hold myself in readiness in the College Hostel to be picked up. So when the next day came I waited for these

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friends but it struck nine and still there was no sign of them. Khwaja Abdur Rahman Amritsaree who was a class-fellow of mine suggested that as it seemed it would be some time before our friends arrived, we might as well have our morning meal. So together we repaired to the dining room, but I was feeling unaccountably sad and took very little. I said to Abdul Rahman that I feared that there had been some accident; that feeling in the town being excited against the Promised Messiah, some ignorant fanatic might have attacked Mian Sahib (*i.e.*, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II) for his being a son of the Promised Messiah. But it did not occur to me that the Promised Messiah might have passed away, even though I knew that he was not in very good health. On the previous day I had gone to the Ahmadiyyah Buildings for *Asr* prayers and when prayers were over some one had asked the Promised Messiah how he felt. Thus even though I knew that the Promised Messiah was not very well, it never occurred to me that he had passed away. However, when it occurred to me that perhaps Mian Sahib had met with an accident, the morsel of food dropped from my hand. Just then I saw Chaudhree Fateh Muhammad and Sheikh Taimur[2] emerging from the gate of the hostel. I saw them from where I sat at the table. I noticed that they appeared to be in a great hurry, and by means of signs I tried to ask them what was the matter. They said something in reply but we could not catch it. We gathered however that they were asking us to follow them, and that they were going to the Ahmadiyyah Buildings. We also saw from their manner that they were greatly agitated.

I then followed these two and took Abdul Rahman along with me. We two got into a tonga and when we reached the circular road we saw a crowd coming from the direction of the Delhi Gate. They were bearing a hearse upon their shoulders. But the face of the man lying on this hearse was painted black and his wide open eyes, were sparkling, while his

[2] Two Ahmadee senior students of the same College—*Ed.*

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head also moved. All round this hearse were people beating their breasts and crying. هائے هائے مرزا.

I was astonished by this sight but failed to grasp its meaning.

When we arrived at the Ahmadiyya Buildings I asked a man there what was the matter. He said, "It is true," but still I did not understand. In my agitation, instead of questioning him further, I went up the steps. The first person I saw here was the late Chaudhree Zia-ud-Din whom I found sitting on the ground, looking very helpless and dejected. I asked him what was the matter, and in a voice heavy with grief he replied that the Promised Messiah had passed away.

My legs failed me when I heard this, and I too sank down on the ground by his side. But soon I rose from there and went behind the Ahmadiyyah Buildings where in those days was an open, cultivated field. Alone in that field I wept with a grief as though my heart was breaking.

I came to Qadian with the *janaza*. When we reached Batala, the coffin was put on the platform on one side and we offered our sunset prayers behind Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I. With many others I kept watch over the coffin that night.

When we had started from Lahore the previous day I had not fully realised that the Promised Messiah had really passed away. Deep, down in my heart somewhere there lurked the foolish fond hope that presently he would get up, that the death which had overtaken him was not the real death but only a temporary phase. But at Batala when I came to know that quantities of ice had been put all round the coffin, I experienced another shock and the foolish hope on which I had been relying in the secrecy of my heart died in my breast. When this happened I sought a solitary corner and wept to my hearts content once more.

When the coffin was placed in the garden lodge which adjoins the *Maqbarah-i-Bahishtee*, I and my

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younger brother requested Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II that we wanted to have a last view of the blessed face of the Promised Messiah. He very kindly took us into the room where the *janaza* was lying. Hazrat *Umm-ul-Momineen* was sitting there by the side of the *janaza*. In silence we took our last view of the silent, peaceful, blessed face and quietly came out of the room, and stood under one of the loquat trees in the garden.

At this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih remarked that while he was having his last look at that blessed face he had vowed to himself that even if the rest of the world were to forsake him and the mission for which he had been raised, come what may, he would remain true to it.

And on hearing this we, too, made a similar covenant with God in our own minds. May He give us the purity and the strength to remain true to this promise.

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# THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

*By Sufi M. R. Bengali, M.A.*

(*Chicago*)

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was founded in 1890 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Punjab, India under an express divine command. He claimed to be the Mahdi whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Messiah whose advent had been foretold in the Bible and in the Moslem Scriptures. He was the promised teacher concerning whose appearance in the last age almost all the prophets joined hands in prophesying. The revelation which he received showed that God appointed him for the regeneration of mankind, as the Mahdi and the Promised Messiah. In fact, in him was fulfilled the promise made by all the prophets of the past.

Ahmadiyyat (which comprises all the teachings and doctrines of the Ahmadiyya Movement) is the Islam which was revealed to the world over thirteen hundred years ago through the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the dispensation which is contained in the Holy Quran. During the course of centuries, however, it had been subjected to innovations and misinterpretations; and on the other hand, many of its aspects had been entirely neglected and consequently had remained unexplored. The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement removed all innovations and misinterpretations and discovered and published the wealth of spiritual truths which lay hidden in the words of the Holy Quran, but to which people had been unable to obtain access. In short, Ahmadiyyat is the true Islam which the Promised Messiah and Mahdi presented to the world in its pure and original form. *Ahmadiyyat and Islam are identically the same thing. Hazrat Ahmad with all the glory that God gave him, was only a servant and disciple of the great prophet Muhammad.* Ahmadiyyat is based wholly on the Holy Quran and

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the Law of Islam. It has revealed to the world many new truths relating to the special conditions and needs of the present age. These truths were presented by the Promised Messiah who has enriched the intellectual and spiritual world by discovering many spiritual sciences. Again, Ahmadiyyat is Islam in its widest sense, that is the Islam which was the religion of all the prophets from the earliest dawn of history to the present day.

The object of the foundation of the Ahmadiyya movement and the advent of Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah can best be presented in his own words. He says :

> The task for which God has appointed me is that I should, by removing the obstacles which have been set up between man and his maker, reestablish in the hearts of men, love and devotion toward God, and by making manifest the Truth, put an end to all religious wars and strife and thus lay the foundation of abiding peace ; and should discover to the world the spiritual truths which it has lost sight of and demonstrate to the world the true spiritual life which has been displaced by material desire and should in my own life manifest those divine powers with which man is endowed and which can be manifested only through prayer, righteousness and devotion, and above all that I should permanently reestablish that bright and unadulterated unity of God which is free from every kind of association of partners with Him and which had entirely disappeared from the hearts of mankind.

Again he says that he has been sent to attract mankind :

> To the truth in all things relating to belief, morals, knowledge, and conduct in such a manner that men should gain strength in all these matters.
>
> Also I have been sent to give the world a firmer faith and demonstrate to the world the existence of God, for faith has withered and the life to come has become a mere fable and the conduct of mankind shows that their whole trust is placed in this world and in things material.

Again he says :

> God has ordained that human spirits living in different parts of the globe, in Europe or in Asia, such of them as are possessed of righteous inclinations, should be drawn toward the One God and collected around One Faith. This being the purpose of my advent into the world, it

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behooves my followers to exert themselves for its realization, always, however, through humility, good deeds and prayers.

The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement explained that the object of man's life is unbounded and unlimited advancement. Man is not born with shackles which he cannot break, and God never shuts to him the gates of liberty and progress.

From all this it would appear that his mission was to preach unity of God ; that man should so regulate his life in conformity with the doctrine as to lead him to moral and spiritual perfection ; that is to say, " Man should love no other thing or being with a love greater than that which he entertains for God, and should place his whole trust in and reliance upon God and should not regard anything or being as having any control over his affairs. A person who believes in the unity of God in this sense and acts upon such belief is sure to experience a moral revolution. All weaknesses in the world proceed from two causes : either because a man loves an object with such intense love that he regards his existence as useless without it, or because he regards an object so injurious and hateful that he imagines his salvation depends upon the destruction of this object. This unreasonable excess of love or hate leads man to do things that are incompatible with righteousness and moral integrity. But a person whose faith in the unity of God is perfect, prefers not the love of any other object or person to his love for God and hates nothing so intensely as being led away from Him. To such person sin becomes an impossibility. Such a person wholly resigns himself unto God and finds his complete satisfaction and highest bliss in union with Him. It is to teach practically such unity of God that Hazrat Ahmad had been sent by Him."

To establish virtue and righteousness, to restore to the hearts of mankind true faith and devotion, to open the gates of spiritual knowledge, to find a solution for moral, intellectual, social and economic problems, to abolish war and disorder and bring about the universal peace and brotherhood and thus to demonstrate to the world the glory of God and to establish His kingdom

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upon earth, are the high and noble objects of the Promised Messiah's advent.

A truly splendid mission and a glorious prospect. The same was the mission of all the prophets of the past. They came with the same high and noble Truth.

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet the scaffold sways the future;
And behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God, within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own."

Like all the divine messengers of the past and those who served the cause of universal truth and humanity, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement had to pass through the fiery ordeal of the bitterest opposition and the severest persecution. People professing different religions and creeds united in their efforts to disgrace and harass him and his followers and to put an end to his cause. A number of the devoted followers of this World Teacher were stoned to death simply because they adopted his teachings. His followers were subjected to hardships of all descriptions for the simple reason that they accepted him as their spiritual guide. But truth cannot be suppressed long. The bitterer the fire of persecution, the brighter does the Truth glow. So it happened in this case.

In spite of the stubborn opposition which the Movement had to encounter in the promulgation of truth, it is making progress by leaps and bounds.

It is a new movement, only about fifty years old and yet has spread to the uttermost corners of the globe. It has a membership of nearly two million people representing all races, colours, nations, classes and ranks. The movement maintains regular missions in many parts of the world including England, North and South America, various parts of Africa, Italy, Palestine, Dutch East Indies, Straits Settlements, China, Japan and Mauritius. It produces literature on an extensive scale and more than a dozen magazines and newspapers,

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published in diverse languages radiate from its various centres in the different parts of the world. The activities of the far-flung movement are daily being intensified for the worldwide expansion of Islam.

A task of incalculable value which the Holy Founder of the movement performed was to put an end to all religious strife and conflict. In order to accomplish this high purpose, he laid special emphasis on the teaching of the Holy Quran which states that, in all countries and in all ages, divine teachers, the spiritual reformers and prophets appeared for the guidance of mankind. He definitely stressed the basic and fundamental unity of all religions. He made it increasingly clear that whatever differences exist among the votaries of the various faiths are due to the abuse of the universal truth which was the One Mission of the founders of all religions. These differences are man-made and human corruptions. The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement instilled into his followers a supreme and an enlightened tolerance toward other faiths by inculcating not only respect for but faith and belief in all the prophets of God. Thus he laid solid foundation for abiding religious peace.

In order to bring about religious peace Hazrat Ahmad, made certain concrete propositions, which are noted below :

1. The founders and the leaders of the different religions must not be referred to in a manner calculated to wound the feelings of their followers.

2. In the propagation of their faiths, the missionaries of each religion must confine themselves to the expounding of the merits, beauties and excellences of their religions without making any attack upon other religions. Because to find fault with other religions does by no means prove the truth or superiority of one's own.

3. The followers of a religion must not ascribe to their religion a doctrine or a teaching which is not directly deducible from their scriptures. Both the doctrine and its proof must be cited from the revealed book of the religion.

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4. The advocates of different religions must be required not to confine themselves to an abstract explanation of the teachings of their religion, but also to illustrate in practice the results which can be obtained by acting upon those teachings, so that people might be able to judge whether those teachings do or do not lead to any result.

The greatest single work accomplished by this World-Teacher is that he implanted a spirit of righteousness, moral integrity, spiritual discernment and understanding and indwelling love of God in the hearts of those who entered into his fold. In fact, he worked a moral revolution among his followers. His teachings have produced such sanctifying and lasting effect upon the lives of his adherents that wherever there is an appreciable number of the members of this great movement, although they do not differ from others in external appearance, yet they are easily recognized by virtue of their excellent moral character, spiritual superiority, sharp intellect and extraordinary aptitude for knowledge. A large number of those who embraced the teachings of Hazrat Ahmad, the promised Messiah and have followed them in letter and in spirit have been blessed with direct communion with God.

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# THE HOLY QUR-AN IS THE WORD OF GOD

*By Ch. Mohammad Abdullah, B.A. (Hons.), B.T.*

The Muslims all over the world, despite their sectarian differences, hold a common belief that the Holy Qur-an is the Word of God. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (May peace be upon him!) in its entirety; and it is the Last Book that has been given for the benefit of the whole human race. The Muslims also believe that unlike other Books the Qur-an is a Living Book. It is capable of guiding the people of all climes and of all ages in all the matters pertaining to their good. It lays down sound principles for the spiritual, moral, social and economic advancement of man. Being the Word of God it is infallible and infinite and unfolds its new excellences in every age. It is never out of date in any respect, and as the man's knowledge increases he can discover in it new truths. It is a tree that yields fruit at all times.

It is not merely a pious belief, but is a conviction based on strong arguments. Dispassionate and unbiased readers who study it with the devotion and care that a book of this nature demands are sure to be convinced of its excellences.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Holy Qur-an which makes it unique among the so-called revealed books is that it is self-sufficient. It gives sound arguments in support of all its claims and assertions and needs no advocate to speak for it. And it is just as it should be. For it does not behove a book claiming divine origin to stand in need of services of man to advocate its cause. For God is الصمد (Not dependent on others) and His Word must embody this attribute.

In the same way another attribute of God is عالم الغيب (*i.e.* the knower of the unseen, the invisible or of the things to come.) So a divine revelation must partake of this attribute also. This attribute of

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God is not shared by man, save to the extent to which He Himself initiates His chosen ones. Consequently the true Word of God must be in conformity with this divine attribute. This attribute provides us with a crucial test to ascertain the truth of the claim of a Holy Book. And it is not an exaggeration to say that no book other than the Holy Qur-an is able to hold its own when judged by this standard. It is this book and this book alone which has stood this test for more than thirteen hundred years. It contains prophecies and predictions regarding Islam and the Muslims, and about the fate of the rejecters and repudiators of its divine mission, and regarding other important matters that were ordained to make history. The number of such prophecies is not small and nor are they confined to one age or one people. Every generation has seen and sees the fulfilment of these Quranic predictions, and ours is not an exception.

Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled in the person of the Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him !) and some are being fulfilled even to-day.

In the last *Surahs* (chapters) of the Holy Qur-an there are many prophecies about the 'last days' —particularly our own age. One of these predictions occurs in the *Surah*, Al Mursilat (Chapter LXXVII). In this *Surah*, the rejecters—those who have repudiated the mission of the Holy Prophet of Islam (May peace be upon him) have been promised a 'Day of Decision' (يوم الفصل). The day will be preceded by 'Emissary Waves' *directed one after another from heights.* These waves will *travel at a great velocity*, and will *broadcast the sound far and wide.* They will not lose *their identity and will not be mixed up* and will *carry the word to excuse or to warn.*

Now a little reflection will show that in these verses there is a clear reference to the wireless. The main characteristics of these electric waves have been beautifully set forth in clear and unambiguous terms in the first six verses.

As for the "Day of Decision" (the present dreadful war), 'it will bring woe unto the repudiators.'

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As for the means of destruction on that day, the shadow or *covering having three branches* (Cross, the symbol of Christianity) ' shall not avail them.' ' It will not give them shelter or relief *from the flames* which will throw up *sparks like castles*.'

Is it not a miracle of the Holy Qur-an and is it not a convincing proof of its being the Word of God that things which were to be invented or events that were to occur thirteen hundred years later, were unfolded and revealed to the unlettered Prophet (May peace be upon him !) who was living among the most backward people in a forsaken part of the globe ? He foretold the doom of his repudiators at Mecca at a time when they felt jubilant, and thought that they had practically strangled his mission. Every reader of Muslim history knows how wonderfully did these predictions come true in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (May peace be upon him !). Now we see that in our own days, these prophecies are once more being fulfilled. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him !), whose advent is spoken as the second coming of the Holy Prophet, came and warned the world of the coming danger. But the world heeded not. And the result is the blood-shed, destruction, ' tear, toil and sweat.'

We give below the text and translation of a part of this *Surah*, which contains the prophecy regarding the World War and the invention of the wireless telegraphy which had to play such an important part in connection with this war. There is a clear reference to the weapons of destruction which will throw flames or start huge fires. Christianity will fail to render relief or shelter to its followers and there will be terrible destruction and nothing will avail the repudiators.

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## Surah LXXVII

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. By those (waves) sent from heights one after another. | والمرسلت عرفاً |
| 2. Then by those that travel speed. | فالعصفت عصفا |
| 3. By those that broadcast (sound) far and wide. | والنشرات نشراً |
| 4. By those that retain their identity. | فالفرقت فرقا |
| 5. Then by those that bring down the word. | فالملقيت ذكراً |
| 6. To excuse (or to accuse) or to warn. | عذراً او نذراً |
| 7. Most surely that which ye are promised shall befall. | انما توعدون لواقع |
| *** | *** |
| 12. For what day is the doom fixed? | لاى يوم أجلت |
| 13. For the Day of Decision. | ليوم الفصل |
| 14. And what will make you know what the Day of Decision is? | وما ادراك ما يوم الفصل |
| 15. Woe unto the repudiators (rejecters) on that day! | ويل يومئذ للمكذبين |
| *** | *** |
| 29. (It will be said unto them) walk on to that (Doom) which ye called a lie. | انطلقوآ الىٰ ما كنتم به تكذبون |
| 30. Walk to the covering (to take shelter) having three branches. (The Cross.) | انطلقوآ الىٰ ظل ذى ثلث شعب |
| 31. (Which) affords no shelter nor relief from flames. | لا ظليل ولا يغنى من اللهب |
| 32. It (destructive weapon) throws up sparks like castles. | انها ترمى بشرر كالقصر |
| 33. As if they were (rows of) camels of bright yellow colour. | كانه جملت صفر |
| *** | *** |
| 39. If you have a design, plan it against Me (now) | فان كان لكم كيد فكيدون |
| 40. Woe unto the repudiators on that day. | ويل يومئذ للمكذبين |
| *** | *** |

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# DID CHRIST DIE ON THE CROSS?

*By Maulvi J. D. Shams, H. A. Imam of the London Mosque*

The importance of this subject cannot be too highly stressed as it concerns so closely the teachings and beliefs of the three greatest existing religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Jews believe that by nailing Jesus to the Cross and putting him to what was universally accepted by the Jews as an accursed death, they proved beyond any possible doubt that he was a false prophet. The Christians agree with the Jews that he died an accursed death but say that this was in order to save mankind. Paul says in Galatians III "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written 'cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree'."—the reference being to Deuteronomy 21 : 23. "He that is hanged is accursed of God." The Christians also hold that the death of Christ and his resurrection are an essential basis of Christianity, as St. Paul says in his first epistle to the Corinthians: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain" 15 : 14.

Therefore, if we can prove that Christ did not die on the Cross but was taken down in a state of unconsciousness and lived to complete his mission, eventually to die a natural death, we prove also, as a natural consequence, that both the Jews and Christians are entirely mistaken in an essential part of their beliefs and that the Quranic view is correct which holds that Jesus did not die on the Cross for we read in Sura Ma'ida "The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, the like of whom had passed away before him" and in Sura Aal-i-Imran; "And their (Jews) saying we have slain the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. Yet they slew him not, nor caused him to die

*If you are a believer in the glorious past and the no less glorious future of*

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